The University of Chicago

UNITY SCHOOL OF CHRISTIANITY

A PART OF A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE DIVINITY SCHOOL IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

1939

By

JAMES W. TEENER

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UNITY SCHOOL OF CHRISTIANITY

Unity and the Mental-Cure Movement

The Unity School of Christianity originated at Kansas City, Missouri, in the milieu of the Mental-Cure Movement during the last decade of the past century. Its co-founders, Charles and Myrtle Fillmore, came from very different environments. Charles Fillmore was born on a Chippewa Indian Reservation, Minnesota, August 22, 1854. He received only a brief formal education and remembers none in the church or Sunday school.[1] He has been a semi-cripple during most of his life, having retarded the growth of his right leg by a hip injury when only ten years of age. He left home when seventeen years old, migrating first to Texas, where he was engaged as an office worker for a railroad for six years; then he moved to Colorado, where he interested himself in the mysterious and occult, and at the time of the beginning of the Unity movement he announced that he had had twenty years' experience in Spiritualism.[2]

Mary Caroline (Page) Fillmore was born in central Ohio, August 6, 1844. Her parents were leaders in the community and Mary Caroline was given all the advantages of public education. They were also earnest workers in the Methodist Episcopal church. Mary Caroline joined that communion during her girlhood and continued as an active worker in its fellowship until some time after her union with Charles Fillmore. The reason for her change of name from Mary Caroline to Myrtle, a change which she made during her school days, is now unknown. After attending Oberlin College one year,[3] she followed an older brother to Clinton, Missouri.

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[1] Thought, V (February, 1894), 454, editorial. Mr. Fillmore says: "I was not biased on the God question by an orthodox education. Born and raised in the wilderness of the west, my religious education was quite limited. God was an unknown factor in my conscious mind and always has been until the past few years."

[2] Modern Thought, I (August, 1889), 8. Cf. Unity, XLVII (September, 1917), 256.

[3] Letter from the Registrar of Oberlin College, August 10,

Two years later she secured a position in the schools of Denison, Texas, where she taught for six years. She married Charles Fillmore on March 29, 1881.

The marriage of Charles and Myrtle Fillmore made a strange combination: Charles was twenty-six years old, small of body, and slightly stooped, with a decided limp because of his shortened leg, and he also announces that he was suffering from curvature of the spine and deafness in his right ear;[1] Myrtle, tall and slender, was ten years his senior and, according to her claims, was already a victim of tuberculosis.[2] The pair started their home in Colorado but in 1884 they settled permanently in Kansas City. Mr. Fillmore, having engaged in real estate promotion, was at first highly successful, but his business collapsed in a depression of 1887. At this time Myrtle, already the mother of two sons and about to give birth to a third, was deeply troubled because of her "tuberculosis." They then came into contact with Christian Science as interpreted by J. S. Thatcher and E. B. Weeks of Chicago, who opened the Kansas City College of Christian Science in March, 1887. Mrs. Fillmore at once became devoted to this way of thinking,[3] and by 1890 Mr. Fillmore was won to its cause.[4]

1933. Unity School of Christianity publishes that Myrtle Fillmore was a graduate of Oberlin. See Myrtle Page Fillmore (Kansas City: Unity School of Christianity, 1932), p. 8 (memorial booklet).

[1]The Origin and Growth of the Unity Movement (Kansas City: Unity School of Christianity, 1937), p. 3 (pamphlet). By this time Mr. Fillmore called his leg injury tuberculosis of the hip.

[2]Myrtle Page Fillmore, p. 5.

[3]The Fillmores explain Myrtle's experience as follows: "Just when it seemed that there was nothing left to life, there came an extraordinary change over Myrtle. During the many heart-breaking trials she had reasoned out that there must be a supreme power operating by fixed divine law, and that this law, applied in faith and faithfully, must of necessity set aside all destructive agencies. And she applied her theory with remarkable success Her tuberculosis vanished, as did the ailments of her children. . . . . Sickness and poverty became as bad dreams. In their place health and ability to work reigned. And Charles Fillmore, grasping the full meaning of this divine law, began to help her in her ministrations, reaping much benefit physically, mentally and materially" (V. E. Sutton-Mattocks, "Miracles Wrought by a Woman's Faith," The Kansas City Star, November 28, 1926, p. 1c; quoted in Unity Catalog of 1929, p. 3).

[4]Modern Thought, I (January, 1890), 8. Mr. Fillmore says: "In harmony with the foregoing gospel of non-limitation we have taken what seems to us another step in the progressive direction, by the unreserved espousal of that system of scientific religion

The Fillmores never became orthodox Christian Scientists. Their original magazine, Modern Thought, issued in April, 1889, was begun as a "good practical magazine dealing with the mental handling of problems,"[1] and carried this slogan: "Devoted to the spiritualization of humanity from an independent standpoint."[2] However, their Christian Science contacts determined the form and character of their movement. They were deeply influenced by three persons who had been students of Mary Baker Eddy. These three were Emma Curtis Hopkins, Joseph Adams, and Ursula N. Gestefeld. Emma Curtis Hopkins, who had acted as associate editor of the Christian Science Journal for one year, established the Christian Science Theological Seminary of Chicago in 1888. Both Mr. and Mrs. Fillmore studied at this school and he was ordained by it in December, 1890.[3] Under the influence of Mrs. Hopkins, who lectured in Kansas City in January, 1890, the Fillmores changed the name of their magazine to Christian Science Thought in April, 1890. Joseph Adams, a Methodist Episcopal minister for fourteen years and then a Congregationalist minister for another thirteen years, studied under Mrs. Eddy in 1886, and for a short time acted as her assistant in the First Church of Christ, Scientist, Boston.[4] He settled in Chicago in 1887, and there originated a magazine, the Chicago Christian Scientist, the name of which he changed to the Chicago Truth Gleaner in the controversy over the right to use the name "Christian Science" in 1890-1891.[5] Mr. Adams lectured

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known as Christian Science. We have leaned hard in that direction from the first, but because of the narrow sectarian spirit with which Christian Science has been interpreted by many of its advocates, we were loath to come under what we conceived to be a galling yoke. Since listening to Mrs. Hopkins' exposition a broader conception has come to us, and we now see that the basic statements of Christian Science form an epitome of the best features of the ethical and religious systems of the past. . . . . As a consistent Christian Science journal we shall necessarily confine ourselves to the essential methods of that school."

[1]See Weekly Unity, XVII (July 28, 1926), 10.

[2]Modern Thought, I (April, 1889), 1. Carried immediately under the title of the magazine.

[3]Christian Science (Chicago), III (November, 1890), 79.

[4]Chicago Christian Scientist, II (January, 1888), 18.

[5]See Charles Fillmore, "Truth Bows at No Human Shrine," Modern Thought, I (June, 1889), 9.

in Kansas City in 1889. From him the Fillmores took the idea of "love-offerings" as the basis of reward for their help to others.[1] Ursula N. Gestefeld, of Chicago, studied under Mrs. Eddy in 1884; aided in organizing the First Church of Christ, Scientist, in Chicago in 1886; and was elected a director of the church in 1887.[2] Her influence upon Mrs. Fillmore appears in the third issue of Modern Thought.[3] She published several articles in that magazine in the following years and the Fillmores followed her criticism of Mrs. Eddy's teaching concerning "Malicious animal magnetism"[4] and her symbolic interpretation of the book of Genesis.

Unity School of Christianity belongs in the Quimby-Evans wing of the Mental-Cure Movement. Mr. Fillmore early espoused the body-mind theory of W. F. Evans against that of Mary Baker Eddy,[5] and later declared that Mr. Evans' publications were "the most complete of all metaphysical compilations."[6] The Fillmores actively participated in the International Divine Science Associa-

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[1]Chicago Christian Scientist, I (May, 1888), 275 f. Mr. Adams explains why he changed from the system of fixed charges as practiced by Mrs. Eddy as follows: "Now a change has come, and as far as our personal conduct is concerned we cannot walk up to the light which has come to us, and fix a price any longer for instruction or treatment on any condition whatsoever. . . . . Hitherto we have tried to improve upon the Master's plan by telling the applicants for the Truth," 'Yes, we will give it to you on condition that you give us so much money.' This we now see, as never before, changes the basis of our relation to Christ, and makes the applicant of the gospel our Master, inasmuch as we look to him for the pay of time and services, and not to Jesus Christ, our only Lord, from whom we get the Truth and the assurance--'Thy bread shall be given thee and thy water shall be sure" (ibid., editorial).

[2]See First Annual Report of the First Church of Christ, Scientist (Chicago, 1887). This report is lodged in the Chicago Historical Society.

[3]Modern Thought, I (June, 1889), 7.

[4]See Unity, I (September, 1891), 3 (discontinued). Cf. Ursula N. Gestefeld, The Difference between Christian Science and the Science of Being (Chicago: The Exodus Publishing Co., 1899), p. 12; also Joseph Adams, "Common Honesty," Chicago Christian Scientist, II (October, 1888), 97, and Christian Science, II (March, 1890), 229.

[5]Charles Fillmore, "Mind vs Spirit," Modern Thought, I (June, 1889), 4.

[6]Unity, VIII (June, 1897), 447.

tion in the 1890's,[1] and when the New Thought Federation was organized they became members of that group. They withdrew from the New Thought Federation in late 1906, asserting that the name was being appropriated by many to advance new cults, and therefore was no longer a description of "Absolute Truth" as they understood it.[2] They chose rather to be called "Practical Christianity." In 1919, the Unity School of Christianity was invited to unite with the International New Thought Alliance. They accepted on the basis that the Alliance would adopt the "Jesus Christ standard" which they proposed:

> The universe is spiritual and we are spiritual beings. This is the Christ message to the twentieth century, and it is a message not so much of words as of works. To attain this, however, we must be clean, honest, and trustworthy, and uphold the Christ standard in all things. Let us build our house upon this rock and nothing can prevail against it. This is the vision and the mission of the Alliance.[3]

Unity resigned from this union March 7, 1922. Mr. Fillmore gave three reasons for the action: first, Unity had majored in developing a "Jesus Christ standard" of teaching which was either denied or neglected by others of the group; second, the "open platform" of the Alliance brought speakers to Unity centers who presented ideas at variance with Unity's standard; third, the Alliance was developing a unity of organization and control beyond that anticipated by Unity School when it united with the Alliance.[4]

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Unity, XXVI (January, 1907), 63. Mr. Fillmore gives this explanation of their decision: "There is but one foundation upon which we can have a permanent federation, and that is the One Absolute Mind. From that Mind, statements of Truth can be formulated that will be accepted by all who are functioning in the top brain, where the superconsciousness has its seat of action. Those in whom the tide of life flows no higher than intellectual perception, will not rise to the consciousness of this Absolute, hence we cannot expect them to accept its basis of the origin of all things. Only those who think purely and act virtuously in all ways, conserving the vitalities of mind and body, can rise and stay in the top brain, hence we may not get together a very large convention in the beginning, but it will come, and be a permanent federation of all men who are truly seeking unselfishly to do the will of God."

[3] Ibid., LI (November, 1919), 471.

[4] Charles Fillmore, "Why Unity Withdrew from the I.N.T.A.," ibid., LVI (July, 1922), 49-53. In his third criticism Mr. Fillmore said: "The I.N.T.A. directors were doubtless not aware of it, but they were making the Alliance another school of New Thought

Since 1922 Unity has maintained its standing as an independent movement.

Unity's Organization and Growth

Unity began when Mrs. Fillmore, "healed" of her tuberculosis, decided to share her experience with her friends. She soon gathered a small group of people who met twice a week "to radiate thoughts having as their basis the love principle as taught by Christ."[1] Testimonies of healing and silent group meditation upon some helpful thought were the chief elements of the meetings. In 1890 this little group began to gather daily to pray for those in "trouble, sickness and poverty," who found themselves so "dominated by the surrounding error" that they needed others' help. This absent healing treatment marked the origin of the "Society of Silent Help," later called "Silent Unity," the first, and throughout its entire history, the most important group in the Unity organization. It has been both the healing agency of the School and the primary channel through which its wealth has come. Nearly all early requests for help were concerned with health. In 1904, in the midst of their first building campaign, the Fillmores added "prosperity" treatments[2] to those of healing. Now, Silent Unity classifies its requests in five groups--health, prosperity, spiritual illumination, religious interpretation, and family troubles or human relations. A treatment by Silent Unity consists of daily collective prayer by the workers in the department for those seeking aid and a personal letter to each sufferer containing a prayer to be held for the particular difficulty, a statement as to the meaning of the teachings of Unity, and instructions as to how each can coöperate with Unity in helping them-

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people, instead of a federation of the schools that already exist. We were continually urged by the I.N.T.A. to cooperate in building up their school, which was working along lines parallel with Unity, yet so different in many respects that we did not harmonize with them. We were asked to become members of a faculty to establish an I.N.T.A. normal school, when we were already part of the faculty of Unity School, established for the same purpose years before the I.N.T.A. came into existence."

[1] Modern Thought, I (October, 1889), 8.

[2] See Charles Fillmore, "Explanation of Prosperity Thought," Unity, XX (April, 1904), 225. Cf. "About Prosperity Treatments," Ibid., XXI (December, 1904), 336 f.

selves. In 1928, its banner year, Silent Unity received 600,007 requests by letter and 16,717 by telegram. In 1929 the "Good Will offerings" to Unity for this service averaged about one thousand dollars daily.[1] Silent Unity workers now number 104.

The Fillmores, in 1891, organized their business under the name "Unity Book Company." In May, 1897, they changed this designation to "Unity Tract Society" in order that their "publishing department might be relieved of the appearance of a commercial venture."[2] The incorporation of "Unity School of Christianity" was accomplished in April, 1914. The Fillmores consolidated in this organization the Unity Tract Society, the publishing side of their work; the Society of Silent Unity, their healing and prosperity group; the Unity Correspondence School, which provided lessons for those who were unable to attend the regular classes given in Kansas City; the Silent-70, their propaganda group engaged in distributing free literature; and the Unity Pure Food Company, which sought to provide suitable food for those interested in vegetarianism.[3] All the property was held by Charles and Mary Fillmore and their sons Lowell and Royal, who with them

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[1]Statement by Barney Ricketts, Director of Accounting Department of Unity School of Christianity, in the Laura R. MacMahon Will Contest, No. 30415, in the Supreme Court of Missouri, April Term, 1932. Nellie E. Clark, Respondent vs. Commerce Trust Co., et al., Appellants. Appellants' Abstract of Record, II, 914.

[2]See Unity, VIII (May, 1897), 383.

[3]They stated the purpose of their corporation as follows: "The purposes of this corporation are to establish and maintain a School, Institute or College, for the instruction in and promotion of Christianity and the principles and studies for the intellectual, moral, physical and spiritual development and improvement of mankind, and to apply such principles and teachings for such purposes, including the treating of diseases and ailments of persons anywhere; and also in connection therewith, to further carry out these objects, this corporation shall have power to establish and maintain a sanitarium for the treatment and healing of diseases and ailments of persons, and to receive and treat patients; to furnish food and other aids and necessaries recommended by this corporation; to use all lawful and usual methods and means of education, aiding and treating its students and patients; to provide such instruction and aid to persons who personally attend the courses of study and instruction, as well as to those who are at a distance; to grant diplomas and confer degrees on its students who are deemed proficient and fitted to receive them" ("Articles of Incorporation," typed copy given to the writer by Lowell Fillmore).

comprised the board of directors. The rapid increase in the value of their holdings soon brought repeated inquiries as to its legal ownership. In 1918 the stockholder-directors published a "Declaration"[1] that they held the stock in trust to carry out the purposes stated in the charter of the institution. This was followed by an amendment to the original "Articles of Incorporation," June 27, 1921, which stated that no dividends should ever be declared and in 1923 by a "Declaration of Trust,"[2] largely a combination of the two previous actions. The real property, which Charles Fillmore evaluated at three million dollars in 1929,[3] is still under the complete control of the Fillmores. They act as trustees of their own stock, with power to control and operate the business, determine their own compensation, and appoint their successors.

Mr. and Mrs. Fillmore from the beginning repudiated every suggestion that they were developing a new sect or denomination. They publish that Unity School is an "independent educational institution teaching the use of the Jesus Christ doctrine in every day life."[4] They severely criticised Mrs. Eddy when she developed her policy of exclusiveness,[5] asserting that their plan was to present Truth in the church without developing a competing organization. However, their active history over a period of fifty years has been an increasing renunciation of this avowed purpose. They began by denouncing all creeds as "vampires that sucked the blood of spiritual progress."[6] As soon as they developed a sufficient following they began their own church and Sunday school services. When the local Kansas City Society of Practical Chris-

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[1]See "Dedication," Unity, XLIX (August, 1918), 178-79.

[2]See "Concerning Organization of Unity," Unity, LXVII (July, 1927), 9 ff.

[3]Laura R. MacMahon Will Contest, Appellant's Abstract of Record, II, 809.

[4]"The Purpose of Unity," Unity, XC (May, 1939), 86.

[5]Modern Thought, I (February, 1890), 8, editorial.

[6]Ibid., I (April, 1889), 8, editorial. Cf. Unity, XXXIX (October, 1913), 342. Here, Unity says: "All the old creeds and dogmas and forms and ceremonies that have been built up in the name of Christianity during past ages of ignorance, must be broken down and swept entirely away."

tianity was incorporated in 1903, provision was made not only for the continuance of such worship, but for the institution of an ordained ministry.[1]

When they espoused Christian Science by taking that name for their magazine in 1890 they broke with their original purpose to establish "an independent religious journal . . . . liberal enough in its ideas to embrace the good in all sects,"[2] and began the development of a pattern of exclusiveness. This pattern was heightened by their decision, in 1897, to publish in their magazine only articles dealing with "Pure Mind Healing,"[3] and by their twofold experience in and withdrawal from the organized New Thought Movement. Unity fixed the pattern of a sectarian organization upon itself when, in 1918, it established a Field Department to coöperate with the various local Unity Centers.[4] In 1921 Unity published its first official "Statement of Faith."[5] During the 1920's the "Annual Unity Conference and Healing Revival" was developed for the training of Unity ministers throughout the world. In the Conference of 1924 Charles Fillmore organized "Unity Church Universal"[6] and ordained a number of workers for Unity's ministry, but he soon dropped the idea of the church. During this period increasing pressure was placed on the leaders of Unity centers to teach only Unity doctrine.[7] In order to make their admonition effective, the "Unity Annual Conference" was established in 1933. "Unity Annual Conference" functions like the final governing body of any Protestant denomination. Ministers of all Unity centers are ordained by it only after they have fulfilled a prescribed course of study determined by Unity School. These ministers hold

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[1] The Unity Society of Practical Christianity (Kansas City: Unity School of Christianity, 1905), p. 25. Pamphlet.

[2] Charles Fillmore, "Our Mission," Modern Thought, April, 1889, p. 10.

[3] Unity, VIII (May, 1897), 393.

[4] A "Center" is Unity's name for a local church.

[5] See Unity's Statement of Faith (Kansas City: Unity School of Christianity, 1938). Booklet.

[6] See Charles Fillmore, "Unity Church Universal," Unity, LX (May, 1924), 438.

[7] See "Field Department Notes," Weekly Unity, XXIII (October 17, 1931), 6.

their standing in the Conference for only a year at a time. They can use and sell only Unity literature; must make an annual report of their activity, and send copies of all published programs to the Field Department of Unity School. They can invite into their pulpits only those on the approved list of the School.[1] In this way Unity School of Christianity has developed a more centralized control of its centers than is found in most Protestant denominations.

The School must be classed as a Christian sect, not yet come to denominational status. It originated as a critic of the established church, both in its doctrine and ritual, and has continued to express the attitude of dissent. For the most part it does not seek to coöperate with the religious federations of the communities in which it works and is not invited to membership in such organizations. However, as an organization it has developed all the functions that belong to the organized church. It has 89 centers with a ministry of 167, including licentiates, all subject to the direction of the Field Department of Unity School. These centers had an average Sunday attendance in 1938 of 16,900.[2]

But Unity School exerts its chief influence through its publications. Unity--originally Modern Thought, 1889-1890; then Christian Science Thought, 1890-1891; and Thought, 1891-1895--in 1938 had a subscription list of 75,000. In the same year Wee Wisdom, edited by Myrtle Fillmore from its origin in 1893 until her death in 1931, had 114,000 subscribers; Good Business, begun in 1922 as Christian Business, had 15,500 subscribers; Progress, begun in 1927 as Youth, had 46,000 subscribers; and Unity Daily Word, first published in 1924, had 143,000 subscribers. Also Weekly Unity, distributed largely through the centers, averaged 170,000 copies during 1938.[3] In addition, Unity School prints and distributes a large series of tracts and frequently publishes books. There are 400 workers employed in the several departments of the School.

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[1]See Unity Annual Conference Yearbook for the constitution and bylaws of the Conference.

[2]Statement by Celia C. Ayers, Director of the Field Department of Unity School of Christianity, personal interview.

[3]Figures released by Ralph Tackett, Publications' Manager of Unity School of Christianity, personal interview.

Theological Aspects of Unity

Unity Claims that its thought is a syncretism containing the "best from all religions."[1] Mr. Fillmore expressed his original ideal as follows: "Modern Thought hopes to perpetuate its existence by showing the good in all religions and all philosophies."[2] The more apparent sources of Unity's thought are: New England Transcendentalism as represented by Ralph Waldo Emerson,[3] Christian Science,[4] Hinduism,[5] Theosophy,[6] Rosicrucianism,[7] Spiritualism,[8] New Thought,[9] popular science, and the Bible.

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[1]Charles Fillmore, Unity, LIX (October, 1923), 404.

[2]Modern Thought, I (April, 1889), 10, editorial.

[3]Transcendentalism was in the Fillmores' thought before they contacted Christian Science. They named their first son Lowell (1882), and their second Waldo (1884). Mr. Fillmore felt that Emerson's writings contained the "essence of all the higher thoughts" expressed in Christian Science, Metaphysics, Theosophy, and other systems of soul culture (Modern Thought, I [April, 1889], 8.

[4]Christian Science gave Unity its basic pattern--its metaphysical idealism, its nomenclature, its emphasis upon the primacy of health, its insistence upon the practicability of its methods, and its attempt to give its system standing and respectability by appeal to Scripture.

[5]See Charles Fillmore, Modern Thought, I (May, 1889), 8, editorial. He thought of the East as the "storehouse" of the spiritual life. Probably most of the ideas coming from the East were absorbed from Christian Science and Theosophy.

[6]Mr. Fillmore was especially influenced by John Hamlin Dewey, who termed himself a Christian Theosophist. His books, Christian Theosophy and New Testament Occultism, which attempt to unite the teachings of Jesus with the occult knowledge of the East, were largely followed by Mr. Fillmore in his Twelve Powers of Man. Mr. Fillmore evaluates Dewey's message in Modern Thought, I (April, 1889), 15.

[7]See F. B. Dowd, The Temple of the Rosycross (2d ed.; Chicago: F. B. Dowd Publishing Co., 1888). From this book Mr. Fillmore got the "Winged-Globe" which he made the emblem of Unity; also his thesis that all sin is sexual (p. 93); that immortality is attained here on the earth (p. 76); that the soul is located back of the stomach (p. 115); and that regeneration of the body comes through uniting it consciously with Divine Mind (p. 71).

[8]Mr. Fillmore was long a Spiritualist. He still feels called upon to defend Unity against the charge of belonging in that group.

[9]Unity's close connection with New Thought has been noted. The Fillmores' fellowshipped with C. B. Patterson, H. W. Dresser, P. W. Trine, Abel Allen, Elizabeth Towne, Ella Wheeler Wilcox, and other leaders in that group.

These sources suggest that Unity's thought is a syncretism of the East and West. Mr. Fillmore has made an orderly arrangement of this material by the process of intuition. He thinks that man as mind is triune, superconscious, conscious, and subconscious. The superconscious mind is located at the top of the head and is the organ of communion with God.

> The superconscious mind, Christ consciousness, or spiritual consciousness is a state of consciousness, that is based upon true ideas, upon an understanding and realization of spiritual Truth.[1]
>
> Christ is the only begotten Son of God, or the one complete idea of perfect man in Divine Mind. This Christ, or perfect man-idea existing eternally in Divine Mind, is the true, spiritual, higher self of every individual.[2]

The problem of attaining real knowledge is that of direct adjustment of the conscious mind to the Christ mind. The Christ mind is "Supreme Knowing"; consciousness turned upward is "Understanding." When man realizes his birthright as a "Son of God," no outward experience is necessary to knowing.

> Never say, "I don't know"; "I can't understand." Claim your Christ understanding at all times, and declare: "I am not under any spell of human ignorance. I am one with Infinite Understanding." The accumulation of ignorance gathered through association with ignorant minds can be dispelled by the Word. You may know by simply holding that you know. This is not egotism, but spiritual knowing. When you declare divine understanding, you sometimes meet your old line of thought and are disappointed. Right then continue to hold for knowing. Judge not by appearances. Do not act until you get the assurance; if you keep in the Spirit by affirmation, the assurance will come. Will it come by voice? No! you will know through the faculty of intuition. Divine knowing is direct fusion of mind of God with mind of man.[3]

Although Mr. Fillmore is adept at using scientific nomenclature, his theory of knowledge makes him a severe critic of the scientific method. He thinks it foolish to try to store up knowledge and that scientific statements are "constantly shifting opinions." Why, then, should a person struggle through the maze of modern scientific education when one has in him "that which, when opened, will place him in direct contact with universal knowledge

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[1]"Consciousness," Metaphysical Bible Dictionary (Kansas City: Unity School of Christianity, 1931), p. 155.

[2]"Christ," ibid., p. 150.

[3]Charles Fillmore, Christian Healing (Kansas City: Unity School of Christianity, 1928), pp. 106-7.

and enable him instantly and continuously to draw forth anything he may wish to know."[1] The Bible is handled in like manner. It is one of many sacred books, all of which are to be treated with reverence as "records of men as to what their experiences have been in communing with the omnipresent God."[2] The general tendency of Unity, however, is not to criticise statements of the Bible but to reinterpret them by the process of allegorization.[3] The Fillmores belong in the lineage of Origen, Swedenborg, and Mrs. Eddy in this respect. Thus they are able to unite the metaphysical, mystical East and the practical, ethical West, but the East is always regnant.

God.--Although attaching both personal and impersonal symbols to their God-concept, Unity's pattern of thinking is always pantheistic. To think of God in terms of personality is to get a wrong understanding of the character of "Original Being" and its relation to the world. God is Spirit, not person; God is Substance, not matter. He is the "Universal Substance," that which stands back of and under all form and matter, from which flows all manifestation.

> God is not a . . . . person having life, intelligence, love, power. God is that invisible, intangible, but very real something we call Life . . . . Love . . . . Power.[4]

God is idea and manifestation, thought, and extension.[5] As idea,

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[1]Charles Fillmore, Christian Healing, p. 91. It is upon this basis that Unity is able to disregard the scientific approach to every sort of human ill.

[2]Charles Fillmore, The Twelve Powers of Man (Kansas City: Unity School of Christianity, 1930), p. 114. Cf. Unity, VII (October, 1896), 400. Mr. Fillmore says: "Scripture may be a satisfactory authority for those who are not themselves in direct communion with the Lord."

[3]See Charles Fillmore, "The Scriptures," Unity, VII (July, 1902), 19.

[4]H. Emilie Cady, Lessons in Truth (Kansas City: Unity School of Christianity, 1925), p. 6.

[5]Charles Fillmore says: "The is-ness of mind is but one side of it. Being is not limited to the level of is-ness; it has all possibilities, including that of breaking forth from its inherencies into the realm of appearances. Mind has two sides, being and appearance, the visible and the invisible. To say that mind is all and yet deny that things that do appear have any place in the all-ness is to state but half the truth" (Prosperity [Kansas City: Unity School of Christianity, 1937], p. 27). It is in Mr. Fillmore's insistence upon the reality of matter, as ex-

the universe is coexistent with God; as manifestation, the universe is a continuous evolution of God. "Creation is the God-consciousness forming within itself centers, which it seeks to endow, through orderly procedure, with all its attributes."[1] Creation is a process of "ideation." Divine Mind ideates the world into manifestation.[2] The law of Being is that ideas project themselves into forms. Each of these forms expresses all of Being, as one drop of water carries the sea. The real trinity of Being, therefore, is "Mind, idea and expression." This, says Mr. Fillmore, is the significance of the theological Trinity.

> The Father is Principle, the Son is that Principle revealed in a creative plan. The Holy Spirit is the executive power of both Father and Son carrying out the creative plan.[3]

God has achieved self-consciousness in man and supremely in Jesus Christ. This is the climax of the evolution of Principle. Man is a "phase of God-Mind,"[4] the individualized expression of God-Mind.[5] Man has identity only. He is just "the inlet and the outlet"[6] of the everywhere-present substance, life and intelligence. Christ, the Logos, has formed itself into conscious entities for the purpose of continuing the creative process. The "I Am" has become the "I Will." The Trinity--Mind, idea, and expression--has now become Elohim, Jehovah, and Adam. "Adam is the third in the godhead."[7] The unfoldment of Being continues as

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pressed in this quotation, that he differentiates Unity's philosophy from that of Christian Science.

[1]Charles Fillmore, "The Unreality of Matter," Unity, IX (October, 1897), 309.

[2]See Charles Fillmore, Mysteries of Genesis (Kansas City: Unity School of Christianity, 1936), pp. 12 f.

[3]"Holy Spirit," Metaphysical Bible Dictionary, p. 629.

[4]Charles Fillmore, Christian Healing, p. 18.

[5]Myrtle Fillmore says: "God is the one perfect life flowing through us. God is the one pure substance out of which our organism is formed. God is the power that gives us motive power; the strength that holds us upright and allows us to exercise our members; the wisdom that gives us intelligence in every cell of our organism, every thought of our mind. God is the only reality of us" (Frances W. Foulks, ed., Letters of Myrtle Fillmore [Kansas City: Unity School of Christianity, 1936], p. 33).

[6]Charles Fillmore, Christian Healing, p. 21.

[7]Charles Fillmore, The Twelve Powers of Man, p. 98.

this new member of the Trinity deliberately assumes his functions. "Throw yourself into the Trinity, and become its avenue of expression."[1]

Man.--Since Being is triune--Substance, idea, and expression—man, made in the image of Being, is triune--Spirit, soul, and body. Spirit is the invisible, intangible Divine essence of man, the I AM or Logos, upon which the other two phases of the human trinity are dependent. Soul is the demonstration of Spirit. It is that in man which responds to the I AM by saying I will. Spirit is the essence, soul is the agent. The soul forms a body from Spirit or Substance through its power of ideation or thought. "Man is omnipotent Spirit. He expresses himself through soul, which makes a dwelling called body."[2]

The technique by which man is able to continue the creative activity, combining the intangible Substance into forms, is that used by God from the beginning--"God said." "As God created by the Spoken Word, 'without which nothing was made that was made,' so man can create by his spoken word."[3] By going directly to God, or by deliberately lifting his conscious mind to his Superconscious or Christ mind, man can gain that knowledge which, if he so desires, will make him a perfect organ for the expression of Being. "Man's chief end," then, is the self-conscious evolution of Being.

Man's task is to combine the characteristics of Being--Strength, Faith, Wisdom, Love, Power, Imagination, Understanding, Will, Order, Zeal, Renunciation, and Life--according to the law of Truth. "Man forms his own consciousness from the elements of God, and he alone is responsible for the results."[4] Man, as a free agent, had two possibilities: he could "open his mind to the divine intelligence and know the creative law," or he "could

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[1]Charles Fillmore, Christian Healing, p. 19.

[2]Charles Fillmore, "Perpetual Incarnation vs. Reincarnation," Unity, VIII (May, 1897), 421.

[3]Charles Fillmore, "The Healing Word," ibid., XXIV (June, 1906), 363. Mr. Fillmore says: "God is the one Principle; we are as free to use God as we are free to use the principles of mathematics and music. The principle never interferes" (Christian Healing, p. 105).

[4]Charles Fillmore, The Twelve Powers of Man, p. 161.

work out his character through blind experimentation."[1] The human pair ignorantly took the second path, the way of sensation, and expressed that choice through the "misuse of the sex function." The result was disaster for the race.

> Sex sensation has made a broken cistern of man's consciousness; for generations the life stream has been turned into this receptacle, and lust has robbed the bodies of the whole race, making them mere shells, void of life. The failing eye, the deaf ear, the festering or withering flesh, all bear testimony to this perversion of God's life.[2]

The historical consequences of man's "fall" are fourfold. First, each individual soul as it manifests form now has a gross, fleshly body formed by "error-thought." This body is subject to bondage through conscious and subconscious[3] thoughts--"thoughts of fear, anger, jealousy, hate, poverty, death." Second, the race by its inherent power to manifest ideas has created a realm that separates it in consciousness from the Father-Mind. Man has "by ignorant thoughts and words, interfered with the natural harmony--producing cyclones, droughts, floods."[4] Third, these error-traits of mind are handed down from generation to generation through the process of reincarnation.[5] Finally, this had produced a social drag upon the individual. Man, from his birth, is now mired in the realm of effects.[6] Further, the negative social thoughts about him directly affect the individual although he may be unaware of it.[7] The racial state of mind has become so crystallized that each individual is now held in bondage to the mortal beliefs of "sin, evil, sickness, fleshly lusts, and death."[8] The race

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[1] Ibid., p. 50. [2] Ibid., p. 163.

[3] I use the term as defined by Unity--"the sum of all man's past thinking." This refers to previous incarnations as well as the present. "Definitions of Names Used in Practical Christianity," Unity, XL (January, 1914), 30.

[4] Charles Fillmore, "Sunday School Lessons," ibid., XX (January, 1904), 30.

[5] See Charles Fillmore, "Reincarnation Questioned," ibid., XXVIII (April, 1908), 212.

[6] See Charles Fillmore, The Twelve Powers of Man, p. 83.

[7] See "Power of Thought over Another," Unity, LXX (April, 1932), 81. Cf. "Business Problems," Good Business, XXXI (August, 1937), 46.

[8] Charles Fillmore, Jesus Christ's Atonement (Kansas City: Unity School of Christianity, 1937), p. 6. Pamphlet.

has become lost in the meshes of its own thought-emanations.

Salvation.--Unity offers mankind a "practical" salvation from these ills of the flesh which are the result of his ignorant thinking. While it uses much of the nomenclature of orthodox Christianity, it does not concern itself with a future heaven in which the "saints immortal reign." "Unity teaches that the eternal life taught and demonstrated by Jesus[1] is not gained by dying, but by refining the body until it becomes the undying habitation of the soul."[2] Unity is the religion of "Perpetual Incarnation." Salvation means the reversal of the process by which man became lost. Man must deliberately reunite himself with Being, that "God may be all in all." This involves in each individual the reunion of the subconscious mind--"the sum of all man's past thinking," including its work of carrying out the functions of the body--with the Superconscious, the I AM or Christ mind, through the agency of the conscious mind.

The technique for accomplishing this end has four practical steps. First, the individual must enter into self-realization of his Divinity through the practice of the "Silence." In this way the individual can free himself from the "personal" or sense-consciousness, the cause of all his sufferings, and restore to its rightful throne the Superconsciousness. Second, he must practice "Denial." Denial (repentance in orthodox theology) is the method of cleansing the individual from those temporary manifestations of evil that have been formed by the sense-consciousness. Through denial the individual repudiates the false beliefs that have produced physical, mental, or financial trouble.[3] Third,

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[1]Mr. Fillmore says: "It adds greatly to the stability of a Christian's faith to know that Jesus anticipated the discoveries of modern science of the existence of that kingdom called the 'ether.' He named it the kingdom of the heavens and His illustrations of its possibilities are unsurpassed. He did not say it was a place the good would inherit after death but an estate we could have here and now" (Prosperity [Kansas City: Unity School of Christianity, 1938], p. 5).

[2]Charles Fillmore, "Why Unity Withdrew from the I.N.T.A.," Unity, LVII (July, 1922), 49.

[3]"What man forms that is evil he must unform. . . . . Here enters the factor that dissolves the structures that are no longer useful; this factor in metaphysics is known as denial" (Charles Fillmore, The Twelve Powers of Man, p. 148).

"Man has power to dissolve all disintegrating, discordant and disease forming words. This is the greatest discovery of all ages" (Charles Fillmore, Christian Healing, p. 64).

"Affirmation" is the method of calling the cells of body and mind, now cleansed of error, to their divine tasks. All the infinite possibilities of Divine Mind are waiting to be manifested by the "I can" habit. "You can praise yourself from weakness to strength, from ignorance to intelligence, from poverty to affluence, from sickness to health."[1] Affirmation is the linking of the "I will" with the "I AM" to the manifestation of the perfection of Being. Fourth, the individual must coöperate with the "Divine Substance" he is seeking to manifest. He must develop "those habits which keep him making the right use of all his faculties and powers and the life energy and substance."[2] Here, the Fillmores, following their theory of the origin of evil, have stressed two requirements for the regenerative process. The person seeking regeneration must be absolutely continent,[3] and he must become a vegetarian.[4] They have taught that flesh-eating and the use of such stimulants as alcohol and tobacco naturally follow from indulgence in sex-sensation.

There is no hell for those who fail to follow the path of regeneration and demonstrate body perfection here and now. Because of the many generations of "mortal consciousness" through which the race has passed, man may not be able to overcome the thoughts of error in a single life-span. Therefore, when death takes place, the law of Being works in man's soul for re-embodiment, and the soul "takes advantage of Adam's habit of generation to

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[1] Ibid., p. 74. [2] Letters of Myrtle Fillmore, p. 74.

[3] Unity's most recent statement on this subject follows: "Regeneration means just what that word describes--a regeneration of man's soul and body through a spiritual activity of the generative organs. In regeneration the generative center is no longer allowed to waste its substance on the sense plane; by pure thinking and chaste acting it generates an uplifting, living energy in soul and body that, when raised to the Jesus Christ purity of life, arouses all the faculties to power and ability. Then the understanding of the silent and spoken word is magnified, and with renewed thought, it comes forth in a new expression in both soul and body" (Cora Dedrick Fillmore, Christ Enthroned in Man [Kansas City: Unity School of Christianity, 1937), p. 151.

[4] "Food is an important issue in the regenerative process and no flesh-eater can survive" (Unity, XXXIV [February, 1911], 180). This was a common idea before 1920, but is not stressed so much today. Charles Fillmore has dropped the habit of vegetarianism to the point where he eats fish. He does not indulge in other flesh.

regain a body."[1] Unity teaches that "reincarnation is a token of God's love for us whereby, if we lose the body, we may be reclothed with another, to try again to complete the great work the Father has given us to do."[2]

Unity teaches that man is not immoral but that he is anemic. "Error mentality envelops the human race like a smoky fog."[3] The life-cells of man's body have become so encrusted with error that there is no possibility of one, through his own unaided efforts, arousing them to their appointed task of demonstrating eternal life. For mankind to be saved it "became necessary that some great soul reconnect us with the Father-Mind."[4] Jesus Christ, a perfected soul who attained creative power in a cosmic evolution previous to human history,[5] has done this for us. When man, the offspring of Jehovah, lost his communion with the Father-Mind by acting independently of that Mind, Jehovah or Christ, in order to redeem man, began a series of physical incarnations. These physical incarnations reached their climax in Jesus of Nazareth. Christ gave up for ages His consciousness of spiritual perfection in order to contact with our mentality. He entered into the diseased and corrupt flesh consciousness of the race, and, through a series of incarnations, he finally in the human Jesus "reestablished the intermind relation that once existed between man and God."[6] The body of Jesus became a bridge between the human race and God. Jesus Christ broke through the crystallized thought strata that enfolds the race; he "made a great rent in the sense consciousness and opened a way by which all who desire may demonstrate easily and quickly."[7]

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[1]Charles Fillmore, Preserving the Unity of Soul and Body (Kansas City: Unity School of Christianity, n.d.), p. 1. Pamphlet.

[2]Ernest C. Wilson, Have We Lived Before? (Kansas City: Unity School of Christianity, 1936), p. 47.

[3]Charles Fillmore, "The Metaphysical Significance of the Crucifixion," Unity, LXX (January, 1929), 6.

[4]Ibid., p. 7.

[5]See ibid., p. 6. Cf. ibid., LXXXVI (January, 1937), 4.

[6]Ibid., LXX (January, 1929), 7.

[7]Charles Fillmore, Jesus Christ's Atonement, p. 7.

The saving work of Jesus Christ has a twofold aspect: first, He is our "Way-Shower" or example; second, by the process of resurrection and atomization He sowed the atomic units of His body as "points of life and light in our mind and body atmosphere, to the end that anyone who concentrates his thoughts upon Christ in faith might attract as a spiritual magnet one or many of His body atoms."[1] These body atoms may then be made the nucleus of a regenerate body.

The most significant part of Jesus Christ's work was that of a "Way-Shower." Mr. Fillmore sets this forth under the symbols of the first and second coming of Christ. The first coming of Christ was Jesus' realization in His conscious mind that He was the Son of God. He dissolved out of His mind every racial thought that had bound man through the ages. He achieved that supreme spiritual selfhood in which He could truly say: "I and the Father are one." Jesus, as soul, recognized Christ, His Superconsciousness, as His Father. He consciously made Himself one with Absolute Being. "He had no consciousness separate from that Being, hence He <u>was</u> that Being to all intents and purposes."[2]

The second coming of Christ was "the awakening and the regeneration of the subconscious mind through the superconscious or Christ mind."[3] Jesus made use of the Christ mind to the redemption of His body. Through the lifting up of his consciousness to the Christ mind, He learned that there are "inherent in the mind of Being twelve fundamental ideas, which in action appear as primal creative forces."[4] These "primal creative forces" have their residence in man as presiding egos. "The subconscious realm in man has twelve great centers of action, with twelve presiding egos or identities."[5] Jesus symbolized this with His twelve disciples. These twelve faculties of Being, the disciples which represent them, and their centers or action in the human body are as follows:

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[1]Charles Fillmore, "All the Way," <u>Unity</u>, LXXXVI (January, 1937), 4.

[2]Charles Fillmore, <u>Jesus Christ's Atonement</u>, p. 11.

[3]Charles Fillmore, <u>The Twelve Powers of Man</u>, p. 15.

[4]<u>Ibid</u>., p. 53. [5]<u>Ibid</u>., p. 15.

Faith--Peter--center of brain.

Strength--Andrew--loins.

Discrimination or Judgment--James, son of Zebedee--pit of the stomach.

Love--John--back of heart.

Power--Philip--root of tongue.

Imagination--Bartholomew--between the eyes.

Understanding--Thomas--front brain.

Will--Matthew--center of front brain.

Order--James, son of Alphaeus--navel.

Zeal--Simon the Canaanite--back head, medulla.

Renunciation of Elimination--Thaddaeus--abdominal region.

Life Conserver--Judas--generative function.[1]

Jesus, when He reached a certain stage in His soul development, called to the aid of the I AM these twelve egos of His subconscious life. This is symbolized in Scripture by His going up "into the mountain to pray," and calling the twelve. The mountain is His Superconsciousness located at the top of His head. By direct appeal to these presiding egos He built up the centers over which they preside. He thought through these other brains, mastered the functions of the body which they direct, arrested the deterioration which had been taking place throughout the body because of the error-thought of the race, and revitalized and refined the "man of the flesh into the man of the Spirit." In other words, Jesus through His conscious mind, brought the I AM into direct contact with each of the brain centers of His body to their purification and empowerment. Thus He achieved eternal life in the body.

He finally put to death the "Judas consciousness" which through the centuries has robbed the race of its vitality. In doing this He passed through great suffering and seemed to die.[2] Instead He transmuted His body into a higher spiritual substance.

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[1] Ibid., p. 16.

[2] "The crucifixion of Jesus is the symbolic representation of the crossing out (destruction) of the carnal mind (Satan) in the redeemed man's consciousness. Christ was not killed on the cross, neither was the body of Jesus destroyed. The 'ghost' that Jesus gave up with his last breath was mortality. It was the personal, mortal consciousness that cried, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' (This god should always be spelled with a small g.) The personal concept God always fails to save its worshipper" (ibid., p. 69).

In His resurrection Jesus "unloosed the dynamic atoms of His whole body and released their electrical energy."[1] By thus atomizing His body into the racial atmosphere, "Jesus offered His body as a life or electric transformer"[2] for the race. This is the "At-one-ment" He made for the human family.

Jesus has made plain the way to the eternal reunion of Spirit, soul, and body. Man can go in at the "rent" Jesus has made. Whoever has advanced in spiritual consciousness to the point where he is "willing to give up all worldly ambitions," conserve the "pure substance of his body," and develop the twelve "creative brains" of his body may follow Jesus in the refinement of his body and its resurrection from death. Jesus attained what is expected of us. We must work out our salvation.[3]

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[1]Ibid., p. 5.

[2]Charles Fillmore, "All the Way," Unity, LXXXVI (January, 1937), 7.

[3]Unity has a regular technique for cultivating the twelve "brain centers" to the refinement of the body into life. See Cora D. Fillmore, Christ Enthroned in Man, Chapter XIV, "Condensed Exercise on the Twelve Powers," pp. 163 ff.